

## CAPSULE SUMMARY

CT-1345

Octavius Bowen Tobacco Barn

Corner of Aspen Road and Alder Road

Port Republic Vicinity

Calvert County, Maryland

The Octavius Bowen Tobacco Barn was built by James Chesley circa 1847 and was owned by Octavius Bowen as soon as 1866. The barn is situated at the intersection of Alder and Aspen Roads within what is now the Scientists' Cliffs Community. The barn sits on a small rise near the entrance to the community. The barn features a cross-axial plan oriented east to west. The original barn measures thirty-two by twenty-four feet while three sheds adjoin the barn on its east, west and south elevations. Documentary evidence as well as physical clues within the barn suggests that Chesley and Bowen may have both experimented with flue-curing in this barn.



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## 7. Description

Inventory No. CT-1345

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Octavius Bowen Tobacco Barn was built by James Chesley circa 1847 and was owned by Octavius Bowen as soon as 1866. The barn is situated at the intersection of Alder and Aspen Roads within the Scientists' Cliffs Community. The barn sits on a small rise near the entrance to the community. The barn features a cross-axial plan oriented east to west. The original barn measures thirty-two by twenty-four feet while three sheds adjoin the barn on its east, west and south elevations. Documentary evidence as well as physical clues within the barn suggests that Chesley and Bowen may have both experimented with flue-curing in this barn.

The barn is three bays wide with two fourteen foot bays and a central four-and-a-half foot door bay. There are eight rooms within the barn. The barn's structure consists of heavy hand-hewn timbers joined with pegged mortise-and-tenon joints. Four single doors are centered on the north, south and west elevations atop a continuous sill. The sill is supported by fieldstone piers. Two posts, aligned transversely across the barn hold pegs which support a stripped sapling, which in turn supports the mid-point of tier poles stretched perpendicularly across the barn. There are two tiers of stripped sapling tier poles below the plate.

The barn is sheathed with vertical board siding on all elevations despite the presence of sheds on three sides. The siding is particularly close together on the east and west sides while wider gaps in the siding on the north and south elevations appear to be covered with riven battens in some places. Metal flashing along the east top plate also seals the eave on that side. Sealing around barn suggests it might have been used for flue-curing. In addition, there are no vents in the vertical siding. The roof is covered with corrugated sheet metal. Rafters are on four foot centers and rest on a flat false plate with windbraces. Each rafter is supported by three collars. Some of the upper collar beams show evidence of charring.

A Period II shed measuring fourteen by twenty-four feet extends off the barn's east elevation. Heavy earthfast round posts provide the primary support for the shed. A similarly constructed Period III shed measuring fourteen-and-a-half by twenty-four feet extends off the barn's west elevation. A Period IV shed measuring sixty-and-a-half by fourteen feet extends across the barn's south elevation and features a similar style of construction. Tier poles in all three sheds extend from the shed plate to wooden blocks nailed to the Period I barn's siding. The southern wall of the Period IV shed is open. This shed may have been used to house cattle.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. CT-1345

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates ca. 1847

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☐ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Octavius Bowen Tobacco Barn remains one of the few barns in Calvert County that might have been converted for flue-curing. Physical evidence of charred timbers and sealed walls suggests the barn was made air-tight at one point, a key criteria for flue-curing. Instead of letting air pass through the barn's doors and vents to cure the tobacco, farmers who used the flue-curing method built a fire in a furnace on the floor of the barn making the tobacco within the barn very hot and dry. As opposed to fire-curing (a process that entailed open fires on the barn's floor), flues prevented fire and smoke from hitting the crop but still produced the desirable heat-cured yellow tobacco. James Chesley had family connections and lived very close to George Dorsey who partnered with Bently Bibb and George Needham to patent the Tobacco Curing Apparatus, one of the first flue-curing devices distributed in Maryland. Octavius Bowen acquired the Chesley farm in 1866 and likely continued the flue-curing as a "tobacco furnace" was listed in his 1882 estate. The much of the barn's sealing was removed after Bowen's ownership, however, and the barn was converted back to air-curing. The Chesley-Bowen Tobacco Barn represents an experimental era of tobacco curing and barn adaptation.

Information gathered from this barn can also be used to understand larger patterns of tobacco barn construction and curing processes across southern Maryland. Between 2007 and 2008, the Center for Historic Architecture and Design conducted intensive-level documentation across Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties on tobacco barns that represented both common and unique construction between 1750 and 1950. Like the Calvert County Tobacco Barn Survey conducted in 1990, the purpose of this study was to document and record tobacco barns as a highly threatened architectural and agricultural resource. The National Trust for Preservation cited the Southern Maryland Tobacco Barn as one of the eleven most threatened building types in the United States. Information from this study reveals specific patterns of change over time in use and construction of tobacco barns across the southern Maryland region.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. CT-1345

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage of historical setting 470

Quadrangle name Prince Frederick

Quadrangle scale: 1: 24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	Anna Blinn Cole, Graduate Research Assistant		
organization	Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware	date	February 2009
street & number	307 Allison Hall	telephone	302-831-8097
city or town	Newark	state	DE

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

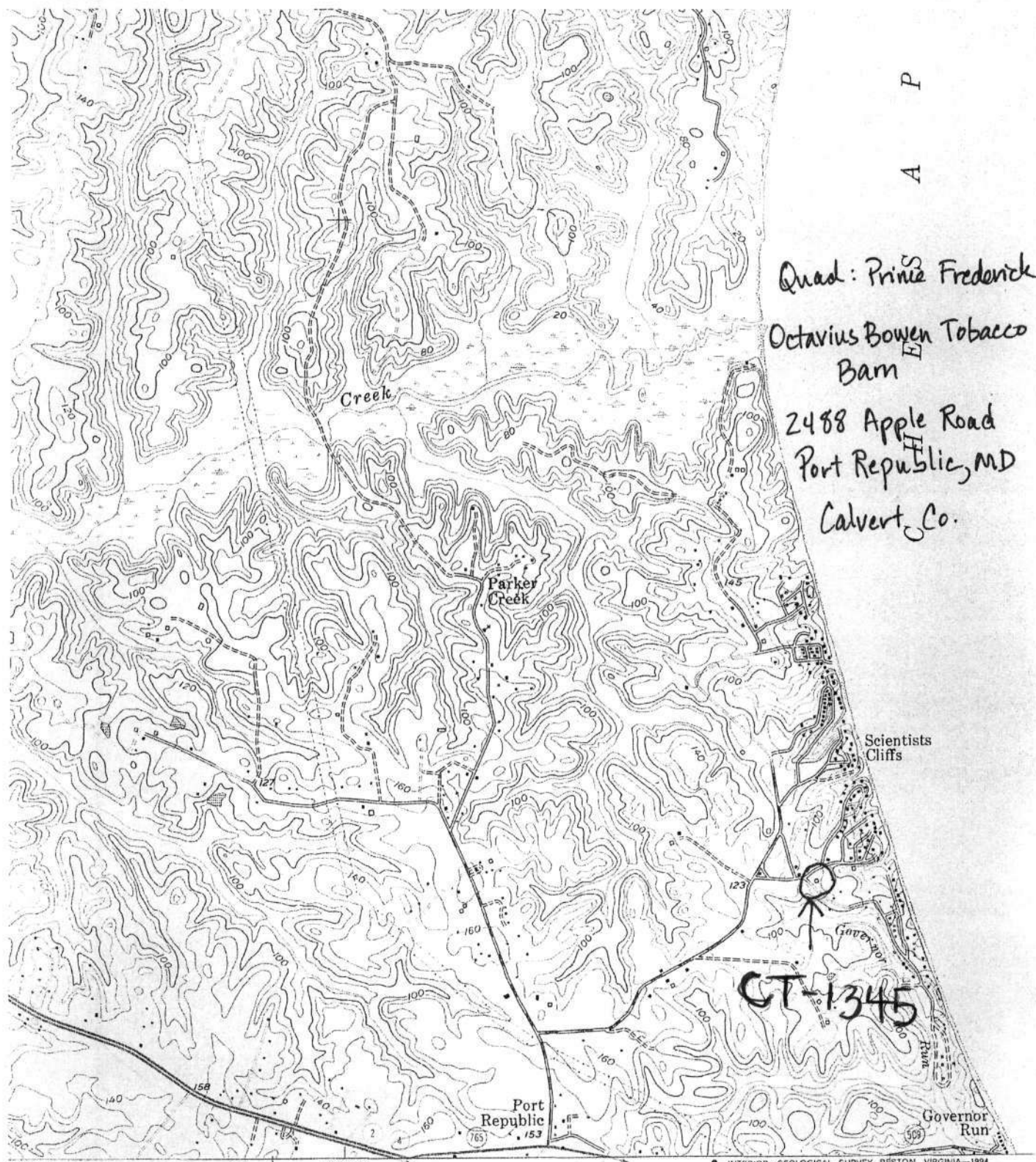
CT-1345  
Octavius Bowen Tobacco Barn  
Corner of Aspen Rd. and Alder Rd.  
Port Republic Vicinity  
Calvert County, Maryland

For additional documentation of this resource see the "Southern Maryland Tobacco  
Barn Project"; call number FRR Mary 21



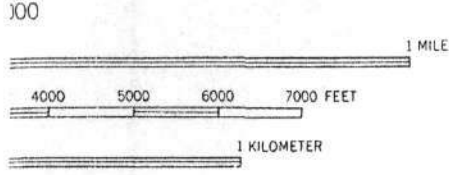
P  
A

Quad: Prince Frederick  
Octavius Bowen Tobacco  
Barn  
2488 Apple Road  
Port Republic, MD  
Calvert Co.



AND) 365 32°30' 19 MI. TO MD. 235

INTERIOR--GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA--1994  
SAINT LEONARD 2 MI., LUSBY 8 MI. 368000m E.



20 FEET  
L DATUM OF 1929



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, hard surface \_\_\_\_\_ Light-duty road, hard or improved surface \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary highway, hard surface \_\_\_\_\_ Unimproved road \_\_\_\_\_  
○ Interstate Route □ U. S. Route ○ State Rc

1963

PRINCE FREDERICK



CT-1345 Octavius Bowen Tobacco Barn  
Port Republic, Calvert County  
Photo by Center for Historic Architecture and Design Staff  
Looking southeast  
January, 2008